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FORCE PROTECTION  
FOR DEPLOYED AIR FORCE RESOURCES,  
PROTECTING AGAINST GROUND ATTACKS IN THE  
USCENTCOM THEATER

BY

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**FORCE PROTECTION FOR DEPLOYED AIR FORCE RESOURCES  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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Prior to the Khobar Towers bombing, in June 1996, "force protection" was not a wholesale term in the Air Force. "Antiterrorism" was the expression used to describe measures taken to deter terrorist attacks and protect installations. Force protection is not a synonym for antiterrorism. Instead, force protection is a larger effort designed to provide comprehensive security for personnel and resources with antiterrorism being a subset. This paper will canvass force protection measures against ground attacks from strategic to tactical levels for Air Force personnel and resources in the U.S. Central Command theater of operations.



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## **FORCE PROTECTION FOR DEPLOYED AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES, PROTECTING AGAINST GROUND ATTACKS IN THE USCENTCOM THEATER**

There is one time tested and proven fact about airpower--no other power in the world has the capability to defeat the United States Air Force (USAF) in the air. During the Gulf War, the media broadcast to the world the strength of U.S. airpower and its value and importance to national security. For an adversary eager to neutralize or at least blunt U.S. military power, ground attacks are effective ways, and air bases are choice targets. Project AIR FORCE of RAND Research concluded three objectives to ground attacks: (1) destroy high value assets, (2) temporarily suppress sorties generations at critical times of a conflict, (3) to create a strategic effect.<sup>1</sup>

The Air Force's growing reliance on unique, high value, surveillance and intelligence aircraft such as Rivet Joint, Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), Joint Surveillance and Targeting System (JSTARS), and precision performance stealth fighters and bombers in some ways makes airpower more vulnerable than during the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> A ground attack that disabled only a few of these high profile assets could have a catastrophic effect on an air campaign. Rapid reproduction of modern high-tech aircraft is next to impossible. Sniper fire from a high caliber rifle could easily damage the intricate electronics of an AWACS aircraft. Shrapnel damage to a stealth aircraft's surface would increase its detectability and decrease its effectiveness. Killing or injuring operators and support personnel could severely disrupt operations. A successful attack on an air base during the build-up or early stages of Desert Shield could have provided ammunition for opponents of U.S. involvement and undermining support for the President's decision to intervene.

This paper will canvass force protection measures against ground attacks from strategic to tactical levels for Air Force personnel and resources in the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) theater of operations. It is beneficial to first review the history of ground attacks on air bases to segue from security to air base defense to antiterrorism programs to current force protection measures. Additionally, threats and how they are conducted will be probed. Recommendations to strengthen force protection are offered in the conclusion.

Various force protection measures have been initiated since the Khobar Towers bombing. However, the question still remains; can the Air Force provide adequate ground force protection for deployed forces and resources in the USCENTCOM theater of operation? This paper will conclude that it cannot do this monumental task alone. Coordinated protection between multinational and joint services is the key to effective deterrence and protection.

## HISTORY

General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff during WWII, approved formation of 296 Air Base Battalions in February 1942. This action piggybacked formation of the Royal Air Force Regiment whose sole purpose was to protect British air bases. U.S. air bases did not experience serious threats in 1942 and these battalions began inactivation the next year due to lack of utilization. Other U.S. military units were tasked with protecting air bases on a situational basis. By the end of WWII, the Army Air Force had no troops dedicated specifically to air base defense.<sup>3</sup>

In 1947 the U.S. Air Force became a separate service. The April 1948 Key West Agreement described the roles and missions of the U.S. armed services. Base defense was described as a common function for all services.

When the Korean Conflict erupted, the Air Force had approximately 10,000 air police. Their primary mission was traditional law enforcement and physical security. The numbers rose rapidly to 39,000 within less than a year and a half. A USAF air base defense school was formed and many officers and noncommissioned officers were trained in U.S. Army schools. Equipment and vehicles were purchased to support the buildup. After the build-up, air bases in Korea received some harassment from North Koreans but no large-scale conventional attacks. At the end of the Korean Conflict, Congress questioned the need for a massive USAF police force. The Air Force could not justify the numbers, mainly due to the absence of doctrine for air base defense nor a formal air base ground defense program. The Air Force directed a twenty percent reduction of air police forces. Consequently Air Police returned to basic law enforcement and physical security. The base defense school was inactivated and procurement of special weapons stopped.<sup>4</sup>

USAF main operating bases (MOB) were victims to more attacks during the Vietnam War than any other conflict in history. MOBs suffered through 475 attacks between 1964 and 1973. The attacks left 99 USAF aircraft destroyed and another 1,170 damaged.<sup>5</sup> Responsibility for defending the air bases rested with the host country, U.S. Army, and Air Force security police. At the outset, air base defense was a low priority of the Vietnam Army and the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). This low priority resulted in 447 standoff attacks out of the 475 total. Although the Air Force security police allowed only 16 penetrating attacks, a huge deficiency in their training was exploited.<sup>6</sup>

The November 1, 1964 attack on Bien Hoa Air Force Base slipped between the creases of perimeter security. The attack demonstrated the destruction capability of a small ground force with good intelligence, precise planning, and conventional weapons skills.

About 700 troops of a Vietnamese Regional Force (RF) battalion armed with rifles, machine guns, and three 60mm mortars per company were assigned to protect Bien Hoa. Unfortunately, the RF forces were handicapped with poor training and leadership and they seldom conducted night patrol operations. Without night patrols and listening posts the RF were not able to detect activity beyond the perimeter. The Viet Cong attack forces established six 81mm mortars 400 meters from the perimeter the night of October 31. Shortly after midnight they fired on the airfield. Five B-57s were destroyed, eight received major damage, seven received light damage. In all, the entire B-57 squadron was taken out of service by a small attack force in less than 20 minutes. No enemy was captured.<sup>7</sup>

The MACV commander directed several air base defense initiatives as responses to the Bien Hoa attack. Initiatives included: wider dispersal of aircraft; building revetments and shelters; replacing RF forces with regular Vietnamese Army (ARVN) units; intensive RF and ARVN patrolling within 4 kilometers of base perimeters; placing defense weapons and aircraft on call; installing wire barriers and perimeter lighting; and removing vegetation for clear zones.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Viet Cong attacks on air bases were one of the major justifications to send ground troops (U.S. Army and Marines) to Vietnam to provide standoff security.

Within eighteen months after Bien Hoa, every MOB in Vietnam was attacked. Then the attack on Tan Son Nhut, the most destructive of the Vietnam War, occurred in April 1966. This 13-minute attack with mortars and recoilless rifles destroyed two aircraft and damaged 62. A 420,000 gallon fuel tank was ignited into flames and 34 vehicles destroyed or damaged. The runway also suffered crippling damages.<sup>9</sup>

Battle assessments credit air base defense improvements initiated after Bien Hoa with lessening the damage of the Tan Son Nhut attack. Base defense fortifications at Tan Son Nhut included: aircraft revetments and wire barriers around priority areas; installing trip flares and mines; and ARVN augmenting the RF on perimeter defense. Regional Forces also increased night patrolling. Almost at the same time the attack was launched a RF patrol detected and ambushed part of the Viet Cong attack force. USAF military working dogs also detected activity along the southwest and west perimeters resulting in firefights that halted base penetration.<sup>10</sup>

The Viet Cong attacked Da Nang in February 1967. Air base defense of Da Nang was significant because the U.S. Marines was the service with primary defense responsibility. This one-minute attack damaged thirteen aircraft. The Viet Cong fired 140mm rockets eight kilometers from the base.

The Marines launched aggressive countermeasures against future rocket attacks. They included helicopter patrolling at almost tree top level, extending anti-infiltration fences out to the maximum range curve of 122mm rockets, and installing sensors.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the Vietnam War the Viet Cong fired rockets on air bases from far away as eleven kilometers. The most effective countermeasure to standoff rocket attacks were shelters. By 1969 the Air Force had built almost 100 15-inch concrete covered steel arch shelters at Da Nang.<sup>12</sup>

Case studies and historical accounts drew the following conclusions from attacks in Vietnam:

- Security Police were highly effective in detecting and stopping penetrating attacks.
- The Vietnamese launched only 21 sapper attacks that caused little damage to Air Force aircraft.
- Ninety-six percent of the attacks were by standoff weapons.
- Standoff attacks were extremely difficult to impede.
- Additional ground and air patrols were needed to control the standoff footprints.<sup>13</sup>

After the Vietnam War interest in air base defense declined as after WWII and the Korean Conflict. The first major air base ground defense initiatives for the Air Force came in 1984 as results of Vietnam lessons learned. Army Chief of Staff, General John A. Wickham Jr, and Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles Gabriel, signed an agreement to spawn and nurture joint battlefield operations. This agreement was called the "31 Initiatives." Two of the initiatives, Joint Service Agreements 8 (JSA #8) and 9 (JSA #9) targeted air base ground defense.<sup>14</sup> JSA #8 tasked the Army to provide air base ground defense outside air base perimeters. JSA #8 authorized the Army to coordinate host nation support for external security, but held the Army ultimately responsible for external security. Some Air Force security police leadership and "old-timers" saw this agreement as a set back to USAF gains and improvements in the ground defense arena. Questions surfaced on the justification for JSA #8 since the Army was and still is the Service charged with conducting land warfare. Included in the charge is defending bases threatened by large ground forces, focusing on battalion size. As chronicled during the Vietnam War, the ground threat to air bases was seldom larger than platoon size. JSA #9 tasked the Army to train Air Force security police in ground combat skills. In 1987 the Army started training USAF security police enlisted and officers in ground combat skills at Fort Dix, New Jersey. JSA #9 was terminated due to budget and manning constraints in 1995. Ground defense training was shifted back to Camp Bullis training area of the Air Force Security Police Academy at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. JSA #8 never came to fruition.

Nonetheless, air bases and USAF personnel were targets. Gunmen fired small arms on a hanger at Albrook Air Station in December 1989, at the beginning of Operations Just Cause in Panama. Three factors contributed to no damages or injuries. The number of gunmen was small, their attack came from the tall grass area outside the airfield fence, and the attack was brief.<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent years saw an increase in worldwide terrorism, especially in Europe and the Middle East. The June 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia where 19 airmen died and over 500 injured was the wake up call to Department of Defense (DoD) specifically the Air Force, and signaled the wholesale use of the term "force protection."

The method of attack was a standoff explosives laden vehicle. The Defense Special Weapons Agency estimated the amount of explosives to be close to 20,000 pounds of TNT.<sup>16</sup> Existing protection measures were in place for explosive devices equivalent to 250 pounds of TNT. This incident certainly caused strategic effects.

U.S. chain of command reactions were immediate, from the Executive branch to the Air Force. The President condemned the bombing and promised to go after those responsible. The Secretary of Defense appointed a team known as the Downing Commission to conduct an investigation and to assess the effectiveness of force protection in the Gulf region. The Air Force sent two follow-on teams to conduct investigations and determine accountability. In October 1996, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff established a joint anti-terrorism and force protection division in the Joint Operations Staff (J-34).<sup>17</sup> The Defense Threat Reduction Agency began conducting Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessments (JSIVA) on installations in September 1996. The Secretary of Defense established the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiative Fund for emergency or other unforeseen high priority combating terrorism requirements. Also, immediate planning began to relocate U.S. forces from Dhahran and Riyadh to Al Karj and Eskan Village.<sup>18</sup> The threat to U.S. forces particularly air bases became priority interests on the same level as the mission. Some military leaders were quick to remind that force protection is not the mission.

## THE THREAT

"Whether we declare war on terrorist or not...terrorist have declared war on us"  
—USAWC Guest Speaker, February 12, 2001

Just as the U. S. learned from history, our adversaries gathered lessons learned. One glaring fact surfaced after every encounter. The might of the U.S. Air Force is overwhelming.

Very few nations have the trained personnel, resources, technology, operational foundation, and fiscal capacity to build or purchase conventional and advanced weaponry to counter USAF operators and aircraft. Those that can do present a threat to USAF operations, but most will probably take a less risk-taking approach. In other words, "if you can't beat them in the air, don't let them get off the ground." Ground attacks on air bases are effective ways.

Expeditionary air operations are the USAF mode of the future. Expeditionary air operation places itself somewhat vulnerable to ground attacks. Settling into bare bases has inherent problems such as limited or no aircraft shelters and infrastructure plus no secure billeting for personnel. Using insecure host nation airports compounds the problem. Storage for fuel is often above ground without access control procedures in place. Parking for high value aircraft can be a nightmare due to over crowded conditions. Deploying to nations with internal threats worsens the ability to employ trusted local nationals.

Project AIR FORCE of RAND Research concluded the ground threat to air bases has increasing probability for several reasons:

- Many see ground forces as their best option for countering USAF airpower.
- Most nations have special forces or other ground troops capable of conducting some type of attack.
- The advanced technologies that make the U.S. military dominant are proliferating to the hands of adversaries, making the threat more lethal.
- Known capabilities of U.S. airpower may make air force bases high priority targets.
- Expeditionary operations complimented with high value unique aircraft at a few forward bases make the bases more vulnerable to ground attacks.
- A successful attack on an U.S. air force base may have a strategic effect out of proportion to the resources expended.<sup>19</sup>

Sizes of the attacking forces influences ground threats to air bases. Sizes are characterized as theater-level offensives, battalion to regiment-sized commando/infantry attacks, irregular forces, and small-unit raids. Theater offensives are large multiple brigades, divisions, corps, or armies too large for rear area defenses to defeat. Battalion-to-regiment-sized attacks are forces of a hundred to one or two thousands enemy troops. Irregular forces are threats that have guises and take many forms. Irregulars can be saboteurs, terrorists, and refugees. Small teams are from two men to a platoon size element.<sup>20</sup> Small teams are extremely destructive and lethal. History has shown that small teams armed with standoff weapons were successful at conducting most ground attacks.

New technology has vastly increased accuracy, lethality, and striking distance of standoff weapons. Weapons that can be hand-carried and employed such as precision guided mortars (PGM), laser assisted 50 caliber rifles, light antitank weapons (LAWS), and man-portable surface to air missiles (MANPADS) are available. Strike distances range from a rifle with two kilometers to three nautical miles for MANPADS.<sup>21</sup>

Air Force doctrine formed four major threat levels:

- **BASIC:** Criminal, natural disasters, environmental, health and disease threats, protestors, rioters, and information resource threats.
- **LEVEL I:** Agents, saboteurs, sympathizers, partisans, terrorists, extremist groups.
- **LEVEL II:** Special purpose units, small tactical units, unconventional warfare forces, and guerrillas.
- **LEVEL III:** Large tactical forces, aircraft and/or theater missiles/artillery with conventional or nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons.<sup>22</sup>

Air Force doctrine also defines methods of attack. Standoff attacks are carried out from outside a base perimeter. Penetration attacks are when the enemy seeks to break through defenses and disrupt the defensive system. Biological/Chemical attacks use living organisms or their toxic by-products to produce casualties. Chemical attacks employ chemical agents to kill, injure, or incapacitate. Terrorist attacks involve the terrorist use of asymmetrical systems such as vehicle bombs.<sup>23</sup>

Air Force doctrinal definitions solidify why ground attacks on air bases are major problems for force protection planners. Force protection is now included in planning phases for deployments and forward basing. Certainly ground attacks cover the four threat levels. Ground attack methods also cover the entire spectrum of methods. Senior officials from the State Department to the provisional wing and security forces commanders have additional headaches when adding in the associated host nation problems as encountered in the Middle East.

The face of terrorist and terrorism has changed but not completely. Middle East terrorist are categorized into two groups. There's still the traditional terrorist armed with small arms and bombs, motivated by ideology or desire for national independence. These groups are normally supported by states such as Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Iran. Most traditional terrorists are linked to groups such as the Palestine Liberation Army (PLO) or spin-offs from these organizations. Traditionals are hierarchically structured and have a "great leader" like PLO's Yasser Arafat. The new terrorist are organized in less hierarchical structures, have varied motives, are more technically advanced and trained, and create difficulties for intelligence gatherers. Most new terrorist group members are also younger than those in traditional groups.

New terrorist groups such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Osama bin Laden's Arab Afghans, and Hezbollah are becoming the most active and have working networks.<sup>24</sup> The Director of Central Intelligence's (DCI) report, *Worldwide Threat 2001: National Security in a Changing World* stated Osama bin Laden and his global network of lieutenants and associates remain the most immediate and serious threat. Osama bin Laden has declared all U.S. citizens legitimate targets of attack. Typified by the bombings of our embassies in Africa in 1998 and his Millennium plots for Y2K. He is capable of planning multiple attacks with little or no warning. Osama bin Laden's organization continues to place emphasis on developing surrogates to carry out attacks to avoid detection, blame, and retaliation. As a result, it is often difficult to attribute terrorist incidents to his group.<sup>25</sup>

New terrorist organizations are increasing their use of advanced communications technologies from cellular telephones and fax machines to electronic mail and world wide web sites. New terrorist groups are aggressively searching the internet to gather information on chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks.

The DCI reported...the threat from terrorism is real, it is immediate, and evolving. State sponsored terrorism appears to have declined over the past five years, but transnational groups, with decentralized leadership that makes them harder to identify and disrupt are emerging.<sup>26</sup> Most alarming about both terrorist groups is their capability to purchase and operate components or complete advanced weaponry systems including weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

## **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

"...Weapons that are capable of a high order of destruction and/or of being used in such a manner as to destroy large numbers of people. Can be nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons..."

—DoD Dictionary

The WMD threat is frightening. Several reasons add to the horror. One, terrorist and potential hostile countries in USCENTCOM's theater of operations do have access to WMD. U.S. intelligence sources reports Middle East terrorist are willing to manufacture, sell, and purchase material and components. Even with confirmed intelligence reports, the U.S. does not know of every country or terrorist organization possessing WMD.

The U.S. does not know if and when these countries or terrorist organizations will use WMD. Those are scary thoughts considering the U.S. has the world's best intelligence community.

Can our U.S. military prevent a WMD attack in the USCENTCOM theater of operations? Are our countermeasures effective? Fear of the unknown is the utmost fear of all. Planning, training, testing, and research are the best countermeasures.

USCINCENT Operations Order 97-01A, Force Protection, has a comprehensive NBC Defense appendix that provides guidance, standards, and training requirements for all units operating in USCENTCOM's theater of operations. Service component are authorized to increase the minimum requirements for NBC Individual Protection Equipment (IPE). However, the Order states in no case will the minimum requirements be reduced without USCINCENT approval. The Order requires deploying units to bulk ship Atropine and 2-Pam Chloride injectors (three per person), 500mg Ciprofloxin tablets (minimum of six per person), Pyridostigmine Bromide tablets (one 18 or 21 tablet blister pack per person), and Convulsant Antidote for nerve agent (one per person). Additionally, deployed units are urged to familiarize themselves with host nation response procedures and/or base defense plans of sites where they will be tenants. Every U.S. member in USCENTCOM's theater of operations is on a NBC training team. Teams are required to train regularly according to individual installations. Each installation is required to exercise their NBC Defense Plan annually.<sup>27</sup>

The USAF Force Protection Battlelab tested a portable sensor system that can detect clouds of chemical and biological poisons during Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment 2000 in the desert conditions of Indian Springs, Nevada. The system fits in a half-ton truck and has ten sensor stations that cover a ten square mile area. The battlelab also tested a hand-held computer loaded with medical information technicians can use to diagnose patients while in field conditions.<sup>28</sup>

Vaccinations are preventive force protection measures. In 1998 the Secretary of Defense ordered Anthrax vaccinations for U.S. military members deployed to the USCENTCOM theater of operations for 30 days or more. The DoD and Federal Drug Administration (FDA) agreed that investigational drugs should be viable options for force protection. President Clinton signed Executive Order 13139 making it official to use the drug with or without consent. The Order requires medical personnel to inform service members of the purpose for administering the drug plus any associated risks and then requesting a letter of consent. An emergency situation waives consent as when Pyridostigmine Bromide (PB) was issued during Desert Storm.<sup>29</sup> The Order allows new drugs that have completed enough testing to be determined as a protection to chemical attacks but have not completed FDA approval processes to be used as vaccinations and antidotes. It takes about ten years for a new drug to pass research tests, get licensed, and stockpiled in sufficient quantity to protect troops.

## AIR FORCE INITIATIVES

The Downing Commission report drastically influenced the direction of USAF force protection programs. A new definition, force restructuring, overall Air Force cultural changes, theater initiatives, and new threats categories evolved.

Air Force Doctrine Document 2-4.1, *Force Protection*, defines force protection as "a collection of activities that prevents or mitigates successful hostile actions against Air Force people and resources when they are not directly engaged with the enemy."<sup>30</sup> The doctrine also stated force protection is not just a security force's interest. Key specialties forming the core of force protection include: civil engineering, Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), communications, intelligence, logistics, transportation, medical, services, and security forces. Air Force incorporated force protection criteria from *Joint Pub 3-10.1 Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Base Defense*, *Joint Pub 3-10, Joint Doctrine for Rear Area Operations*, *Joint Pub-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*.

The security police career field received major enhancements. Enlisted Law enforcement, security, and combat arms career fields were merged into one—Security Forces. At Air Force level the function was reorganized under USAF Air & Space Operations as AF/XOF, Security Forces Directorate. The Director became dual hatted as commander of the new Air Force Security Forces Center. The Center's mission is to organize, train, and equip security forces for worldwide deployment; explore new force protection concepts; and ensure doctrine, policies, plans, programs, and resources are in place to execute peacetime and wartime missions. The 820<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Group was manned and \$12 million spent on vehicles, communications, weapons, and specialized equipment for rapid deployments.<sup>31</sup>

Force protection extended beyond the security forces umbrella. The USAF Force Protection Battlelab, a multi-discipline organization, was created with its mission being to "Identify innovative concepts and systems to execute the force protection mission and to explore and integrate technology, tactics and training to increase readiness."<sup>32</sup> AFOSI Antiterrorism Specialty Teams were developed to provide worldwide support to commanders and deployed forces.

The Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts changed their Command and Control Systems program office to Force Protection Command and Control and expanded their customer base from security police to medical, civil engineers, intelligence, communications, logistics, and AFOSI. The vision of the program office is to "Be world class leaders in applying technology to force protection command and control systems for the safety, security and survivability of U.S. warfighters and dependents worldwide."<sup>33</sup>

## USCENTCOM AND AIR FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTAF) INITIATIVES

Theater specific initiatives blossomed from USCENTCOM and CENTAF. Recent initiatives included designating the Joint Rear Area Coordinator the Joint Security Directorate. This office took over the security responsibilities of the Joint Rear Area Coordinator and directs USCENTCOM antiterrorism/force protection activities. Force Protection Cells were established on air bases with the leaders responsible to installation group commanders. Core Cell members are representatives from medical, intelligence, civil engineers, and security forces. Installation leadership directs additional membership. They discuss anything remotely related to security and force protection. Security Force's leadership at some bases were granted higher security clearances allowing them access to more intelligence information.

State-of-the art intrusion detection technology was installed. CENTAF spent \$47 million dollars to purchase and install the Tactical Automated Security System (TASS) at air bases. TASS has various sensors, including microwave and passive infrared, mounted on tripods to detect intrusions.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Wide Area Surveillance Thermal Imagers (WSTI) were purchased. This surveillance mechanism can detect a vehicle up to three kilometers and a human up to 1.5 kilometers. WSTI has since been updated with radio frequency linkage.

Security Forces conduct patrols outside base perimeters. Periodically surveillance detection teams follow U.S. troops off base. Security convoys using uparmored Hummvees were established between Kuwait City Airport and Al Jabar and Ali Al Salem bases.

More Air Force manning positions in USCENTCOM became one-year tours. Currently 94 positions are permanent party, 33 are security forces or Force Protection Cells positions.<sup>35</sup>

Although Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have Defense Cooperation Agreements, host nation support is controversial. As a prime example, security forces in Oman are not allowed to carry weapons.<sup>36</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

History has shown that airpower is extremely vulnerable on the ground and that air bases are equally as open to attack from the ground as from the air. The Vietnam War dramatized the ability of small unsophisticated forces to wage successful attacks against air bases. The Viet Cong carried out most of their attacks using standoff tactics making, an approach on foot and firing rockets and mortars without penetrating air base perimeters. Our lesson learned was that any adversary with the will could attack an airbase from the ground. Terrorist or enemy ground attacks on air bases, such as those in the Middle East, could destroy aircraft, disrupt operations, or create a politically damaging event for the United States.

Based upon this study are these recommendations to enhance force protection. The first recommendation is increased information gathering and dissemination. The Downing Commission report stated: "The ability of the theater and national intelligence community to conduct in-depth, long term analysis of trends, intentions, and capabilities of terrorist is deficient."<sup>37</sup> More emphasis needs to be placed on Human intelligence (HUMINT) collection.

Joint force protection doctrine must be developed to cover normal USCENTCOM theater operations. The Joint Pub for rear area operations essentially covers a major theater of war. USAF force protection doctrine covers... "when they are not directly engaged with the enemy." USCENTCOM in-theater operations are not officially in war, but are directly engaged with the enemy. Terrorists have declared war on the United States. Our personnel in USCENTCOM's theater of operation are paid hazardous duty and combat zone pay. Working and living under heightened threat conditions is the norm.

Individual pre-deployment and deployed forces training, especially for senior leaders charged with protecting installations should be intensified. Every level of professional military education and all technical training courses should have a comprehensive block on force protection training. Air Force Instruction 31-210, The Air Force Antiterrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) Program Standards, directs training levels according to DoD standards. Changing mind sets from a non-threatening U.S. posture to combat zones cannot be over emphasized.

The State Department needs to establish Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) with every country in the theater. U.S forces need doctrines for specific host nation agreements. Most important, structure and better commitments from host nations is a must. HUMINT collection would benefit from a well planned SOFA.

The combatant command Joint Security Director should increase joint security operations. The operations and personnel tempo is increasing in all branches. A joint security plan should be developed that provides force protection for all installations in the theater.

Recently, U.S. Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) held a rear area security conference to discuss this issue. Representatives from CENTAF, U.S. Navy Central Command (NAVCENT), U.S. Marine Central Command (MARCENT), U.S. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), Army War College, and Army Training and Doctrine Command attended. Five courses of action (COA) for joint security were presented. Joint security for the theater was divided by a mixture of service components and other variables (chain of command, predominant component zone, region and zone, three regions, and country). Criteria for division were: span of control, facilitation of coordination, component support, leverage of peacetime relationships and simplicity.<sup>38</sup> (See figures 1-6)

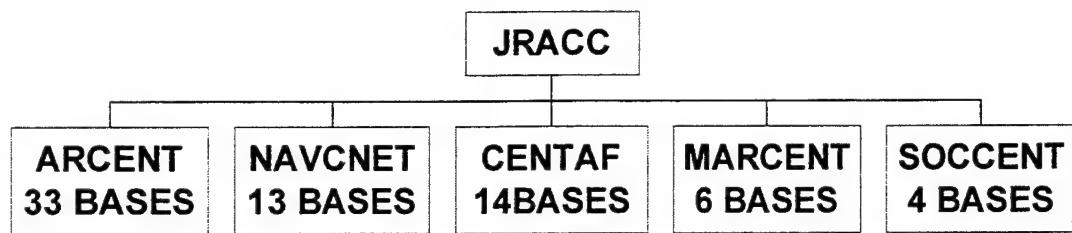


FIGURE 1 COA 1: BY COMPONENTS/COMPONENTS CHAIN OF COMMAND

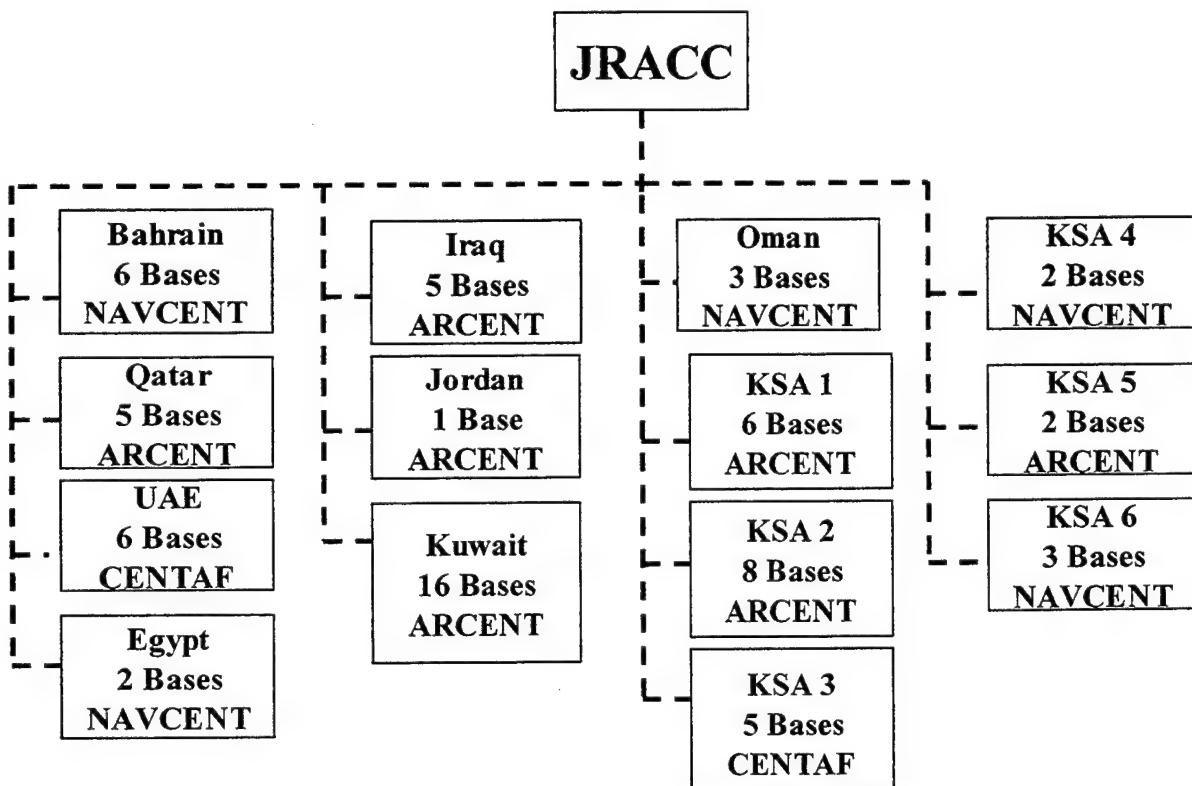


FIGURE 2 COA 2: BY ZONES/PREDOMINANT COMPONENT IN ZONE

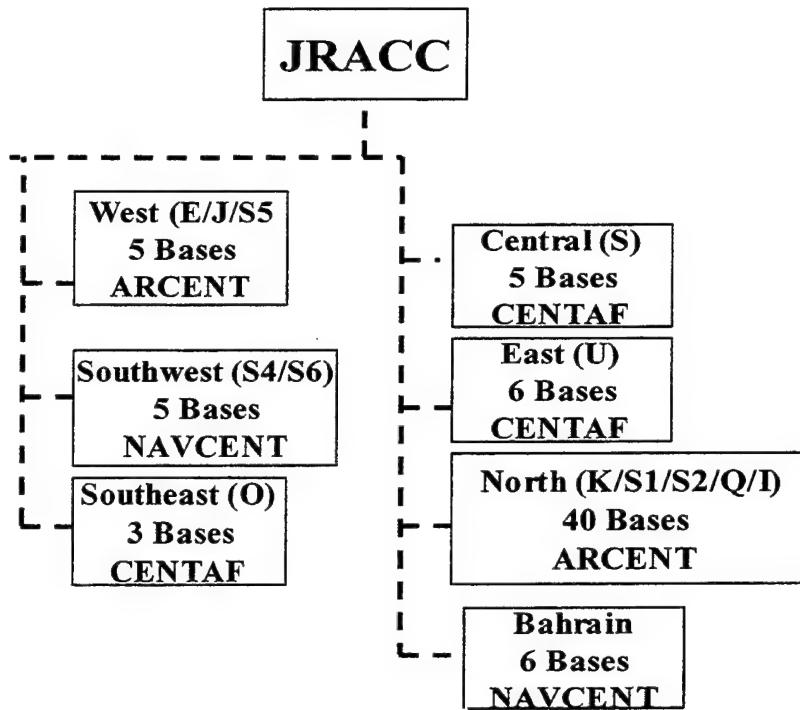


FIGURE 3 COA 3: BY REGION & ZONE/PREDOMINANT COMPONENT IN REGION

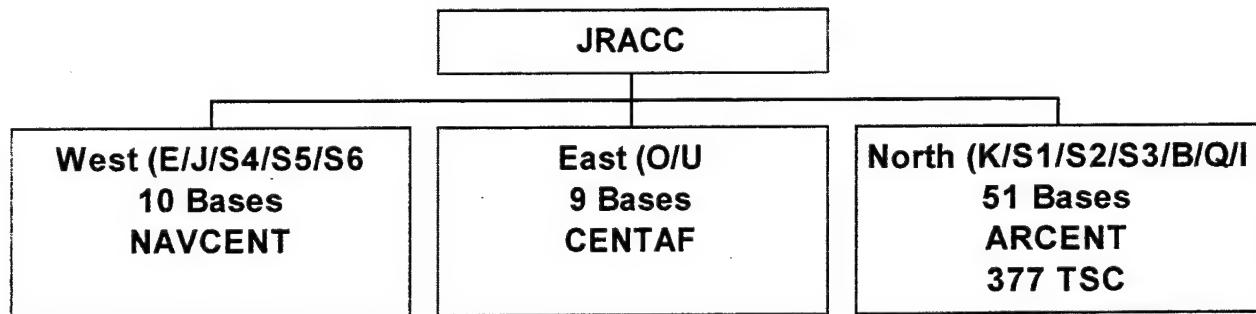


FIGURE 4 COA 4: BY COMPONENTS/COMPONENTS CHAIN OF COMMAND

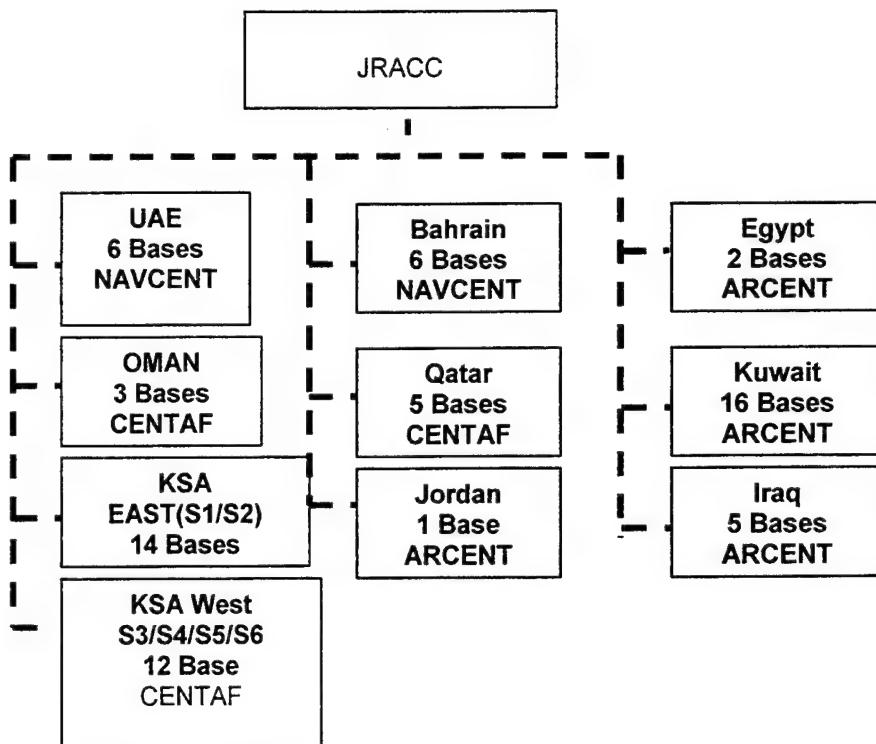


FIGURE 5 COA 5: BY COUNTRY/EA COMPONENT

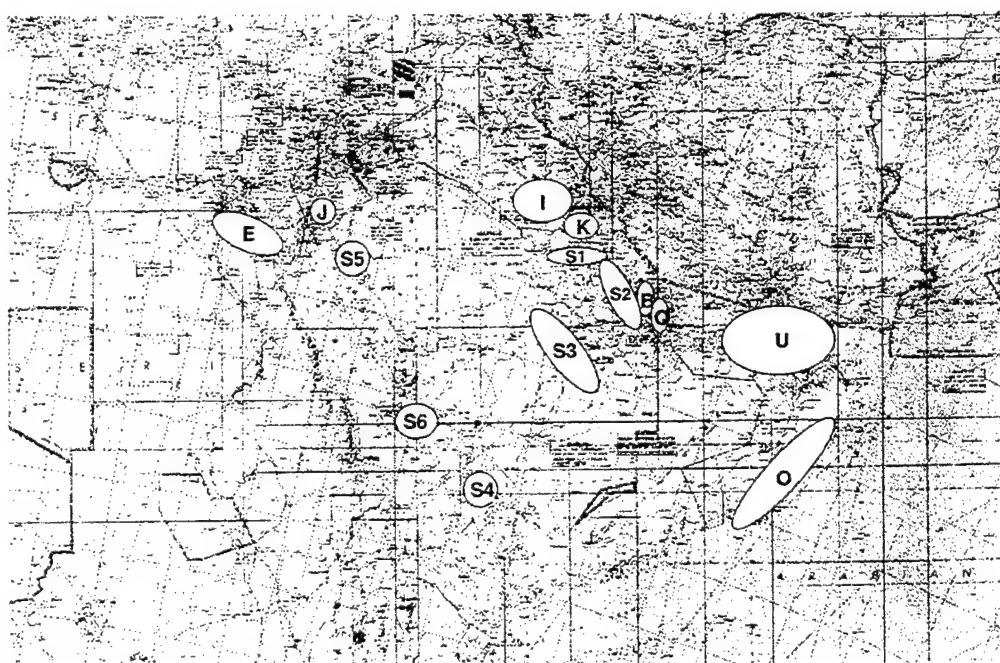


FIGURE 6 JOINT REAR AREA SECURITY ZONES

We must spend wisely on technology, realizing force protection is a big budget program. Technology can be a force enhancer, not a multiplier. Some systems cause a drain on manning to operate and maintain. Additionally, we must invest wisely in human resources research and development. Our scientists must receive sufficient funding to develop, test, and field preventive measures to detect, isolate, and limit the damage of weapons of mass destruction.

The objective of force protection is to influence everyone from senior leadership to the individual service member to acknowledge its significance. With that thought comes the recommendation for strategic leadership to increase support.

Responsible commanders should receive complete support from their chain of command in the unfortunate event of terrorist attacks. Caveat this recommendation with confirming the commanders did everything in their power to prevent the incidents. Emphasis should be placed on weighing the mission against force protection and producing an effective balance. Force protection is not the mission; it supports the mission

The latest draft of Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, (final coordination draft) 5 February 2001 defines force protection as:

Actions taken to prevent or mitigate hostile actions against Department of Defense personnel (to include family members), resources, facilities, and critical information. These actions conserve the force's fighting potential so it can be applied at the decisive time and place and incorporates the coordinated and synchronized offensive and defensive measures to enable the effective employment of the joint force while degrading opportunities for the enemy adversary.<sup>39</sup>

Can our Air Force provide adequate force protection for deployed forces? No, not alone, force protection is a unified action, requiring everyone's efforts.

Word Count 5,273

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>2</sup> RAND, Guarding Against Ground Attacks on U.S. Air Force Bases,  
<<http://www.rand.org/publications/RB/RB33.html>>, Internet: Accessed 19 February 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Richard A Coleman, USAF Air Bases: No Safe Sanctuary, Study Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College 11 Apr 1990), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Vick, Snakes in the Eagle's Nest: A History of Ground Attacks on Air Bases, (Santa Monica, Ca, RAND Publishing, 1995), 68.

<sup>6</sup> Shlapak and Vick, 53.

<sup>7</sup> Vick, 76.

<sup>8</sup> Vick, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Vick, 77.

<sup>10</sup> Vick, 77-78.

<sup>11</sup> Vick, 78-79.

<sup>12</sup> Vick, 79.

<sup>13</sup> Vick, 67-68.

<sup>14</sup> Richard F. Ballard, "U.S. Power Projection Capability and Rear-Area Security, " The Land Warfare Papers, 24 (September 1996): 22.

<sup>15</sup> Shlapak and Vick, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Freeman, Khobar Towers: Why the Air Force Got it Wrong, Personal Experience Monograph, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College 15 May 1998), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Lee Roberts, Joint Staff Develops Division to Help Prevent Terrorism,  
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<sup>18</sup> United States Air Force, "Air Force Policy Letter Digest March 1997,"  
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<sup>19</sup> Shlapak and Vick, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Shlapak and Vick, 44-48.

<sup>21</sup> Shlapak and Vick, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Air Force, Force Protection, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-4.1, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force 29 October 1999), 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>24</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "World Wide Threat 2001: National Security in a Changing World, 7 February 2001, <[http://www.cia.gov/cia/public\\_affairs/speeches/UNCLASWWT\\_02072001.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/UNCLASWWT_02072001.html)>, Internet: Accessed 3 March 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> USCINCCENT Force Protection, Operations Order 97-01A, (McDill Air Force Base, FL, 15 April 1999), C-9-4.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce Rolfsen, "Testing New Ways to Protect Airmen," Air Force Times, 2 October 2000, p. 10 [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, Ebsco.

<sup>29</sup> Douglas J. Gilbert, "White House Sets Rules for Use of Investigational Drugs," 29 November 1999; available from Air Force News at <[http://www.af.mil/news/Nov1999/n19991129\\_992154.html](http://www.af.mil/news/Nov1999/n19991129_992154.html)>; Internet: Accessed 15 February 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Department of the Air Force, Force Protection, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-4.1, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force 29 October 1999), 1

<sup>31</sup> Mark Walsh, "AF Creates Roving Security Force," Army Times, 11 August 1997, p. 26 [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, Ebsco.

<sup>32</sup> Michael C. Venzules, "Putting the Ground Dimension Into United States Air Force Doctrine: An Analysis of the Air Force's New Concept to Accomplish the Force Protection Mission Following the Khobar Towers Terrorist Bombing," Strategy Research Project, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College 15 May 1998), 16.

<sup>33</sup> "Force Protection Office Forms at Electronic Systems Center, Air Force News, <[http://www.af.mil/news/Nov1997/n1997\\_971452.html](http://www.af.mil/news/Nov1997/n1997_971452.html)>, Internet: Accessed 15 February 2001.

<sup>34</sup> John West, Chief, CENTAF Force Protection Cell, Shaw AFB, SC, Interview by author, 14 January 2001

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> James F. Record, "Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing" <<http://www.af.mil/current/Khobar/recordf.html>>, 31 October 1996; Internet: Accessed 2 February 2001.

<sup>38</sup> John A. Bonin, DMSPO, U.S. Army War College, Interviewed by Author 9 January 2001.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Doctrine for Joint Operations. Final Coordination. Joint Pub 3-0. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff), 5 February 2001.



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